



Middlebury College Bulletin

April 1934, Middlebury, Vermont

Bread Loaf Writers' Conference

---

---

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE BULLETIN

Vol. XXVIII

April, 1934

No. 8

1  
The Bread Loaf Writers'  
Conference

1  
MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE PRESS  
W. STORRS LEE, *Editor*

---

---

Published by Middlebury College

Monthly from September to June  
at Middlebury, Vermont

Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office  
Middlebury, Vt., under Act of Congress  
August 24, 1912.

# Bread Loaf Writers' Conference

Conducted by

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

at Bread Loaf Inn

August 16 - August 30, 1934

1

THEODORE MORRISON, Director

## STAFF

Hervey Allen

Bernard DeVoto

Julia Peterkin

Gorham B. Munson

Walter Prichard Eaton

Raymond Everitt

2

## Purpose of the Conference

WHERE can men and women ambitious to establish themselves as writers find criticism at once experienced, honest, and practical? Where can people who wish to cultivate a turn for expressing themselves obtain sensible and impartial advice? To these and a multitude of kindred problems the Writers' Conference at Bread Loaf attempts to provide candid, friendly, and competent answers. Those in charge of the Conference have never believed that it is possible to teach anyone to write well who has no initial aptitude. They do believe that most human beings who really desire to make progress in a given art or profession are more



capable than they may suspect of profiting by stimulation, experienced criticism, and candid suggestions. They believe that it is a valuable and enjoyable experience in itself for a group of less advanced writers to meet for two weeks with more advanced writers and with teachers of proved ability in the congenial surroundings of a country inn, where shop talk, discussion, and common effort unite under the most favorable and friendly auspices.

Many questions may perplex the less experienced writer to which understanding and trustworthy answers are not always easy to find. He may have experimented in several literary forms, and may wish to know which, in the opinion of a qualified critic, he seems most likely to succeed in. He may have received the encouragement of friends, but may wish to submit himself to more severe and experienced judgment by writers or editors trained in making professional estimates of manuscript. He may wish to learn about the practical workings of the publishing world. He may have been encouraged by editors, but without yet attaining the full success that seems possible to him. He may have run into difficulties with a particular manuscript of a story, play, biography, or poem, and may desire to consult about it with someone capable of giving him useful suggestions. In these or any kindred situations, he will do well to consider the aims and opportunities of Bread Loaf.

The Bread Loaf Writers' Conference is conducted

by Middlebury College, but is in no way an academic enterprise, except in so far as it must inevitably call upon the art of teaching in order to accomplish its purpose, which is to help writers with a measure of ability to cultivate their gifts and to make professional progress. The session of 1934 will be the ninth annual session of the Conference, which was inaugurated in 1926 under the directorship of John Farrar, and with the sympathy and participation of such preëminent American literary figures as Robert Frost and Dorothy Canfield Fisher. The Conference relies upon no one method of accomplishing its ends. Its procedure is informal and flexible, combining many devices and modes of operation, as a glance at its program will show.

#### PROGRAM

The program falls into four main branches. First of all, background talks are given each morning by members of the staff on the chief varieties of literary work: the novel, the short story, plays, essays and articles, and verse. In the afternoon, group discussions are held in which the fullest participation by everyone attending the Conference is urgently invited. In the evening, more general talks, readings, or discussions are given by members of the staff or by visiting authors, editors, or critics. Besides these three daily items of the program, there is a fourth item which constitutes perhaps the most valuable opportunity of

the Conference. Everyone who attends is invited to bring manuscript for consideration and criticism by members of the staff. When the staff members have read their share of manuscripts, they make appointments with the various writers individually for personal discussion of the material submitted. These individual interviews between members of the Conference and members of the staff have come to be recognized as one of the most valuable and helpful privileges of Bread Loaf. They afford an opportunity not only for detailed criticism of manuscripts, but for general discussion of any individual problem which has to do with the needs or perplexities of a writer.

## FICTION

### The Novel

Work in the novel will be under the general charge of Julia Peterkin. Awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1928 for her *Scarlet Sister Mary*, Mrs. Peterkin is among the best known writers of fiction in America, and one of the leaders of those who have interpreted to the general body of readers the character and emotional life of the Negro in the contemporary South. A succession of volumes, from *Green Thursday* (1924) and *Black April* (1927) to *Bright Skin* (1932), have established her achievement, and it is a particular pleasure to announce that she will join the 1934 staff at Bread Loaf.



## The Short Story

Bernard DeVoto will conduct the work in the short story. A highly successful writer of fiction himself, he is a regular contributor of stories to the *Saturday Evening Post*, the author of three novels, and now at work on a fourth. His articles in *Harper's* and other magazines are eminent contributions to the critical and controversial life of the country. His acumen as a critic and his scholarship were established by his *Mark Twain's America*. In addition to his other attainments, he is an experienced teacher. He has for a number of years conducted a composition course at Harvard University, and next year will give a course in contemporary American literature.

## Drama

Walter Prichard Eaton, one of the leading American authorities on the stage, will direct the work in play writing. Mr. Eaton knows the history and traditions of dramatic literature, stage production, and acting in England and this country, knows also the leading stage figures of today, and now has charge of play writing in the Yale School of the Drama, succeeding Professor G. P. Baker. He directed the publicity of the Theatre Guild's production of *Strange Interlude*, by Eugene O'Neill, when the play had its run in Chicago, and has had long and successful experience in advising students of play writing.

## Essays and Articles

Mr. Eaton, one of the most versatile members of the staff, will also deal with essays, articles, and journalism. He has himself been a practising journalist of many years' standing. In fact there is hardly a branch of writing in which he has not distinguished himself. Besides plays, he has reviewed music, and is a regular critic of books on old china and gardens. He has himself written essays, verse, short stories, volumes for children, and nature studies. A few of his many titles follow: *Green Trails and Upland Pastures*, *Echoes and Realities* (verse), *Penguin Persons and Peppermints*, *The Actor's Heritage*, *Drama in English*, *Everybody's Garden*.

## Verse

Work in verse will be under the charge of the Director, Theodore Morrison. Formerly on the editorial staff of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Mr. Morrison is now an Instructor in Harvard University. He is the author of *The Serpent in the Cloud*, a narrative poem, and a contributor of verse and reviews to the *Atlantic*, *Saturday Review*, *New Democracy*, and other magazines.

## Criticism

Gorham B. Munson has for some years enjoyed the position of roving critic to the Conference. His lec-



tures on contemporary writers, ideas, and theories of criticism, notable for their intellectual integrity and range of understanding, have been among the most rewarding features of the program. Mr. Munson has had wide and interesting experience as an editor, critic, author, and teacher. He was founder and editor of *Secession*, a left-wing magazine of the twenties. He has contributed to the *Bookman*, *Dial*, *New Republic*, *Little Review*, *Criterion*, and other magazines. He is now American Representative of the *New English Weekly* and literary editor of *New Democracy*. He is the author of biographical and critical studies of Robert Frost and Waldo Frank and of such volumes as *Style and Form in American Prose* and *The Dilemma of the Liberated*. For some years he has been a highly successful lecturer at the New School for Social Research in New York.

### Special Consultant

In former years Hervey Allen was a beloved and veteran member of the Bread Loaf staff. He returns this year, after the publication of *Anthony Adverse*, to take part in the Conference for one week as a special consultant. It is expected that Mr. Allen will participate largely by conferring individually with writers who have some manuscript or project naturally qualified for his attention, not limiting himself to fiction only.

The author of *Anthony Adverse* needs neither introduction nor commendation. But Mr. Allen has long been an author of good books, works indeed which without *Anthony Adverse* would have assured him a place in the literature of his country. *Toward the Flame*, a diary of his war experiences, has been republished during the present year. *Israfel: The Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe*, is a biography monumental in research, profoundly human in understanding. Mr. Allen is also the author of eight volumes of verse, one in collaboration with DuBose Heyward.

### Publication Adviser

Those in charge of the Conference are anxious that all who attend should have the fullest opportunity not only for literary criticism and counsel, but for practical and thoroughly professional advice on problems of getting their wares to market. Accordingly the post of Publication Adviser has been created, and will be filled for the second time by Raymond Everitt, head of the New York Office of Curtis Brown, Ltd., international literary agents, indeed the largest dealers in all manner of literary rights in the world. Mr. Everitt will give talks on markets and the best approaches to them, and will also consult individually with authors of manuscripts that may offer publishing possibilities.

## Fellowships

Believing that the Conference will profit in every way from the presence of men and women best qualified to take advantage of the services of the staff, and that beginners and staff members alike will be stimulated by the presence of a nucleus, as large as possible, of writers who have received definite professional encouragement, the Conference has this year offered four fellowships which will be awarded to candidates proposed by publishers and editors. These are the only fellowships which can or will be offered, and they have been created with the definite purpose of enriching the Conference for everyone who attends it, and of realizing as far as may be the fullest possibilities which the Conference presents either of stimulation or instruction.

The names of the four fellows, together with the publishers who proposed them, will be announced in the newspapers when the selection has finally been made. As this bulletin goes to press, nominations are being received, but no ultimate action has been possible. It may be said here that the qualifications for a fellow do not necessarily consist of an extensive list of books or magazine contributions already published. It is simply necessary that a candidate should have shown promise enough in some branch of writing to win the active interest and support of a publisher or magazine editor. The primary object of the fellowship plan is to bring to Bread Loaf young writers of marked



promise, in the belief that such writers will best profit by the efforts of the staff, and that they will increase the enjoyment and aid in the advancement of the entire group, both the more and the less experienced.

### Visiting Speakers

Bread Loaf invariably takes a special satisfaction in its distinguished visitors who come sometimes for a "one night stand," sometimes for a week end, sometimes for a surprise call of a few hours, to speak to the Conference. Editors, authors, and critics known from coast to coast have been among the number in past years. For the coming session we look forward to welcoming Dorothy Canfield Fisher, one of the most eminent women of letters in the country; John Farrar, New York publisher and founder of the Conference; Archibald MacLeish, a leading American poet, recent winner of the Pulitzer Prize, and an editor of *Fortune*; and Maxwell Aley, editor of Longmans, Green & Co., New York publishers.

### The Location

The Writers' Conference is housed in Bread Loaf Inn, so called because it is situated near Bread Loaf Mountain. It is a picturesque old hotel in one of the most beautiful sections of the Green Mountains, on the border of the great Battell Forest of over 30,000 acres of unbroken woodland. The Inn and cottages form a

community high up in the mountains, far from any village, insuring quiet and seclusion, but easily accessible over good automobile roads.

### Recreation

The region about Bread Loaf offers unusual opportunities for outdoor recreation. Tennis, horseback-riding, hikes over the Long Trail, swimming at Lake Dunmore, and golf at Middlebury and Brandon will enable students to combine recreation with work in a delightful manner.

### Registration

Admission to the Conference involves no specific qualifications, but is subject to the approval of the Director. Application blanks will be sent upon request. Address all correspondence, except correspondence concerning rooms, to Assistant Dean H. G. Owen, Storrs Avenue, Middlebury, Vermont. Correspondence concerning rooms should be conducted with Mrs. Pamela Powell, Secretary of the Summer Session, Middlebury, Vermont.

A charge of \$100.00 covers cost of tuition and board at Bread Loaf for the period of the Conference, and all incidental expenses of registration except room rent. The Conference begins with the noon meal on August 16 and ends after breakfast August 30. Bread Loaf Inn, the home of the Conference, is situated

twelve miles from Middlebury. Free transportation will be furnished from Middlebury to Bread Loaf on August 16 and from Bread Loaf to Middlebury on August 30, but free transportation cannot be provided except on the dates mentioned.

Rooms may be had from \$8 to \$42 for the period of the Conference. Further information will be furnished by Mrs. Powell. A \$20 fee, applicable to the charge for board and tuition, must be deposited with Mrs. Powell on or before August 1 in order to secure accommodations. Because of the shortness of the Conference and the expense of conducting it, no refunds may be granted. Nor may students enroll for less than the entire session. Payment for room, tuition and board must be made at the time of registration *in the form of travelers' checks.*



# The Bread Loaf School of English

R. M. Gay, Dean

Conducted by Middlebury College

June 28 - August 12

1934

1

## SIX WEEKS IN THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SECTION OF THE GREEN MOUNTAINS

The School of English offers graduate courses in the art of teaching, creative writing, English and American literature, and play production. The work is planned for those seeking the M.A. degree and for high school teachers of English. The list of lecturers will include:

HERVEY ALLEN

FRED L. PATTEE

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT

WALTER PRICHARD EATON

JOHN FARRAR

*For bulletins and information address*

H. G. OWEN, *Assistant Dean*

MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT

